

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 30 JANUARY 1992 FROM THE REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE TEXT OF THE
STATEMENT MADE ON 29 JANUARY 1992 BY B.N. YELTSIN, THE
PRESIDENT OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION, ON RUSSIA'S POLICY
IN THE FIELD OF ARMS LIMITATION AND REDUCTION

I have the honour to transmit to you the statement made on
29 January 1992 by B.N. Yeltsin, President of the Russian Federation, on
Russia's policy in the field of arms limitation and reduction.

I would request you to make the necessary arrangements to have the text
of this statement issued as an official document of the Conference on
Disarmament and distributed to the delegations of all States members of the
Conference as well as States participating in but not members of the
Conference.

(Signed) S. Batsanov
Ambassador

Statement of 29 January 1992 by B.N. Yeltsin, President of
the Russian Federation, on Russia's policy in the field of
arms limitation and reduction

Citizens of Russia,

My address today is devoted to a problem of vital importance.

It concerns Russia's practical steps in the field of arms limitation and reduction.

Our position of principle is that nuclear weapons and other means of mass destruction in the world must be eliminated.

This must, of course, be done gradually and on a parity basis.

In this vitally important matter we are open to cooperation with all States and international organizations, as well as within the framework of the United Nations.

The measures I am going to speak about today have been prepared on the basis of continuing interaction with the States members of the Commonwealth and are consistent with agreements reached at the meetings of their leaders in Minsk, Alma-Ata and Moscow.

Russia regards itself as the legal successor of the USSR from the standpoint of responsibility for the fulfilment of international obligations.

We confirm all obligations under bilateral and multilateral agreements in the field of arms limitations and disarmament that were signed by the Soviet Union and that are in effect at the present time.

The leadership of Russia reaffirms its commitment to the policy of radical reductions in nuclear weapons, and of ensuring the maximum safety of nuclear weapons and all installations connected with their development, production and operation.

Russia is making a proposal to create an international agency for ensuring the reduction of nuclear weapons.

In subsequent stages, the agency could gradually bring the entire nuclear cycle under its control, from the production of uranium, deuterium and tritium to the dumping of nuclear waste.

The measures we are taking in the sphere of disarmament are not in any way undermining the defence capability of Russia and the States members of the Commonwealth. We are simply seeking to achieve reasonable minimum sufficiency as regards nuclear and conventional weapons.

This is our guiding principle in the creation of armed forces.

Realization of this principle will make it possible to save considerable resources, which will be used to meet civilian needs and to implement reforms.

Conditions are now favourable for taking major new steps towards arms reductions. Some of them we are taking unilaterally, and others on the basis of reciprocity.

The following are the steps we have taken and intend to take as a matter of priority:

First. In the sphere of strategic offensive weapons. The Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms has been submitted to the Parliament of the Russian Federation for ratification. The ratification process has also been initiated in the United States. In my opinion, this key instrument should be brought into force as soon as possible, and should also be endorsed by Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

Pending the entry into force of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Arms, Russia has taken a number of major steps aimed at reducing the strategic arsenal:

Some 600 ground-based and sea-based strategic ballistic missiles, or nearly 1,250 nuclear warheads, have been removed from stand-by alert.

130 silo launchers for intercontinental ballistic missiles have been eliminated or are being prepared for liquidation.

Six nuclear submarines have been prepared for the dismantling of their missile launchers.

Several strategic weapons development and modernization programmes have been cancelled.

Strategic nuclear weapons, stationed on Ukrainian territory, will be dismantled earlier than planned. The relevant agreements on this matter have already been concluded.

I want to emphasize that we are not pursuing unilateral disarmament. The United States is taking parallel steps in a gesture of goodwill.

It is now possible and necessary to move further along this road.

The following decisions have been reached recently:

The production of heavy TU-160 and TU-95 bombers will be stopped.

The production of existing types of long-distance airborne cruise missiles will be halted. On a mutual basis with the United States, we are prepared to renounce the development of new types of such missiles.

The production of existing types of long-distance sea-based nuclear missiles will be stopped and new types of such missiles will not be developed. In addition, we are prepared - on a bilateral basis - to scrap all existing long-distance sea-based nuclear cruise missiles.

We will not hold exercises involving large numbers of heavy bombers. This means that no more than 30 such bombers will take part in any one exercise.

The number of nuclear submarines carrying ballistic missiles on combat patrol has been halved and will be further reduced. We are prepared, on a bilateral basis, to stop using such submarines for combat patrols.

Within a three-year period - instead of within seven years as planned - Russia will reduce the number of strategic offensive weapons on stand-by alert to agreed levels.

We will thus reach the level that is envisaged in the relevant treaty four years earlier.

If mutual understanding is reached with the United States, we could achieve this level even sooner.

We believe that the strategic offensive weapons that will be left in Russia and the United States after the reductions should not be aimed at United States and Russian targets respectively.

Important talks with Western leaders will be held in the next few days. Proposals on further deep cuts in strategic offensive weapons, to the level of 2,000 to 2,500 strategic nuclear warheads on each side, have been prepared.

We hope that the other nuclear-weapon Powers - China, the United Kingdom and France - will join the process of genuine nuclear disarmament.

Second. Tactical nuclear weapons. Major steps to reduce these weapons have already been taken, in parallel with the United States.

We recently halted production of nuclear warheads for ground-based tactical missiles, as well as nuclear artillery shells and nuclear mines. Stockpiles of such nuclear charges will be eliminated.

Russia is eliminating one-third of all sea-based tactical nuclear weapons and one-half of nuclear warheads for anti-aircraft missiles. Measures to this end have already been taken.

We also intend to reduce stockpiles of tactical nuclear ammunition for the air force by one-half.

The remaining tactical nuclear weapons for the air force could be removed from front-line (tactical) air force units on the basis of reciprocity with the United States, and deployed at bases for centralized stockpiling.

Third. Anti-missile defence and space. Russia reiterates its commitment to the ABM treaty, which is an important factor in maintaining strategic stability in the world.

We are ready to continue impartial discussion of the United States proposal on the limitation on non-nuclear anti-ballistic missile systems. Our position of principle is well known, namely, that, we will support this approach if it strengthens world strategic stability and Russia's security.

I also declare that Russia is prepared to eliminate, on the basis of reciprocity with the United States, existing anti-satellite systems and to work out an agreement on the complete prohibition of weapons specially designed to destroy satellites.

We are ready to develop and then to create and jointly operate a global defence system in place of the SDI system.

Fourth. Nuclear weapons tests and the production of fissionable material for military purposes. Russia emphatically favours the banning of all nuclear weapons tests.

We are abiding by the year-long moratorium on nuclear explosions, declared in October 1991, and hope that the other nuclear-weapon Powers will also refrain from conducting nuclear tests. A climate of mutual restraint would promote agreement on the complete renunciation of such tests. Reduction of the number of tests in stages is a possibility.

In the interest of eventually attaining that goal, we propose to the United States the resumption of bilateral talks on further reductions in nuclear weapons tests.

Russia intends to continue carrying out the programme to halt production of weapons-grade plutonium. Industrial reactors making weapons-grade plutonium will be shut down by the year 2000 - some of them even as early as 1993. We confirm the proposal to the United States that agreement should be reached on the supervised termination of production of fissionable material for weapons.

Fifth. Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles. Russia confirms its obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, including those it assumed as its depositary. We are counting on the very rapid accession to the Treaty of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, as well as other countries members of the Commonwealth of Independent States as non-nuclear States.

Russia declares its wholehearted support for the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and is in favour of strengthening the effectiveness of its safeguards.

We are taking further steps to prevent our exports from spreading weapons of mass destruction.

Steps are at present being taken with a view to Russia's adoption of full-scale IAEA safeguards as a condition for its peaceful nuclear exports.

Russia intends as a matter of principle to accede to the international regime of non-proliferation of missiles and missile technology as an equal participant. We support the efforts of the so-called Australian Group on monitoring chemical exports.

The Russian Federation plans to adopt domestic legislation to regulate Russian exports of dual-application material, equipment and technologies that can be used to create nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as combat missiles.

A State system to monitor these exports is being created. We will establish the closest cooperation and coordination between all member countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States on these issues.

Russia supports the guiding principles on arms trade approved in London in October 1991.

Sixth. Conventional weapons. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe has been submitted for ratification to the Russian Parliament. Other States members of the Commonwealth of Independent States whose territory is covered by this Treaty also attach importance to its ratification.

Russia confirms its intention to reduce, together with other Commonwealth countries, the armed forces of the former USSR by 700,000 in terms of real numbers.

Russia attaches great significance to the current talks in Vienna on reduction of personnel and confidence-building measures, as well as to new talks on security and cooperation in Europe.

These talks might become a permanent all-European forum in the quest for ways of creating a collective all-European security system.

Russia, in cooperation with Kazakhstan, Kyrgistan and Tajikistan, will try to reach agreement during the talks with China on the reduction of armed forces and armaments in the border area.

It was decided not to hold in 1992 major military exercises with the participation of more than 13,000 military personnel, not only in the European part, but also in the Asian part of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

We also hope that it will be possible to sign an agreement on the "Open Skies" regime in the near future.

Seventh. Chemical weapons. We favour the early conclusion (in 1992) of a global convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons. A convention of this nature is required as a means of reliably blocking the way to the acquisition of chemical weapons without infringing the lawful economic interests of its signatories.

Russia is committed to the 1990 Agreement, reached with the United States, on the non-production and elimination of chemical weapons. The time-table for the elimination of such weapons envisaged by the Agreement calls for some correction, however.

All the chemical weapons of the former USSR are deployed on the territory of Russia, which is assuming responsibility for their elimination. We are preparing a relevant State programme on this matter.

We are open to cooperation on this issue with the United States and the other parties concerned.

Eighth. Biological weapons. Russia favours the strict implementation of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention, the creation - on a multilateral basis - of appropriate verification machinery, and the implementation of confidence-building and transparency measures.

Since implementation of the Convention is lagging, I declare that Russia withdraws its reservations concerning the possibility of using biological weapons as a response. These reservations were made by the USSR to the 1925 Geneva Protocol on the prohibition of the use in war of chemical and bacteriological weapons.

Ninth. Defence budget. Russia will continue to make drastic cuts in its defence budget, orienting it towards meeting social goals.

In 1990-1991 defence spending in comparable prices was already reduced by 20 per cent; this figure includes purchases of weapons and technology, which were cut by 30 per cent.

In 1992 we plan to reduce military spending by another 10 per cent (in 1991 prices). The volume of arms purchases will be nearly halved this year as compared with 1991.

Tenth. Conversion. Russia welcomes and favours increasing international cooperation in the field of military conversion.

For our part, we will encourage such cooperation by according "most favoured treatment" and offering tax advantages to appropriate joint projects.

Citizens of Russia,

I have just described the action plan of the Russian Federation on matters of arms reduction and disarmament. I hope that it will receive your support and be appreciated by all peoples of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

I am convinced that it fully reflects the interests of our country and other countries of the world. If it is carried out, our lives will become not only more tranquil and safer, but also more prosperous.

A few hours ago President George Bush of the United States addressed the American people proposing radical cuts in nuclear potentials and the strengthening of stability measures in relations between our countries.

CD/1123
page 8

We have held preliminary consultations on these matters with each other and are at present engaged in a dialogue on the practical implementation of this policy, and of the initiatives proposed. The positions of both sides are quite close.

This is the guarantee of success on the road to the reduction of offensive nuclear weapons.

Thank you for your attention.
